You're so sexy when you aren't transmitting STD's
For anyone who is having sex, has had sex, or plans on having sex ever.

You're So Sexy:
When You Aren't Transmitting STD's
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Special thanks to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Wellness Center, Art and Activism at Columbia College Chicago, Stephen Amara, Beth, my family, and all my wonderful, helpful, friends
A Disclaimer about Sex and Gender

For the sake of simplicity, when talking about the female or male sex, it will appear as either "female" or "male." It must be understood that sex and gender are two related, but separate terms. Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women while gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

Many people are cisgendered, meaning they identify with the gender assigned to them at birth, based on their sex. People may be transgender or genderqueer, meaning they have an identity that lies outside of the gender they were assigned at birth. This may mean that they identify as male while assigned female at birth, neither, both, or somewhere along the gender spectrum. They may feel their gender identity fixed on this spectrum, or changing throughout their lives.

The reason for this explanation is to prevent anyone from feeling that their sexual orientation or identity has been overlooked. While reading this comic please keep in mind that the goal is to promote the highest level of sexual health, and because of this, I have sought to write as clearly as possible while trying to not make assumptions about anyone’s gender.
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Your'e So Sexy

When You Aren't Transmitting STD's

A Safer Sex Comic

But why is it Safer Sex instead of Safe Sex?
DON'T FREAK OUT

Although sex is never completely safe, there are lots of ways to avoid STD's and/or unplanned pregnancies. The main thing to keep in mind is...
KEEP OTHER PEOPLE'S BODILY FLUIDS OUT OF YOUR BODY
STD's (sexually transmitted diseases) are spread through oral, vaginal, and anal intercourse.

Some STD's can be spread through genital touching, or through contact with infected blood.

The more you reduce contact with your partners' bodily fluids, the more protected you are.
There are lots of ways to protect yourself from STDs:

- Internal condoms
- Dental dams

To prevent unwanted pregnancies:

- The shot
- Hormonal pill
- Patch
- The ring

- Spermicides
- Sponge

- Implants
- I.U.D.
- Barriers
- Diaphragm

Keep tabs on your sexual health:

- Get tested!
- Check out your body!
- Talk to your health care provider

Good ideas.
TALK ABOUT IT

We all remember the sex talk...

But talking about sex is important. Communicating with your partners about sexual health and consent is the foundation on which all safe sex practices are built.

So... should we pick up condoms on the way home?

I got tested 3 weeks ago, what about you?
Consent is Mandatory

Consent is mutual permission between partners that what they are doing is okay and safe. Consent is not just not saying no, consent is an enthusiastic yes!

Talk about consent before things get hot and heavy and keep checking in. It's your responsibility to make sure everyone is having a good time.

is this okay? what about this? Still okay? Alright cool.
The more you drink the more attractive you will find me!

I'm HIV positive, I have condoms that taste like chocolate.

If you loved me you would want it.

Not Okay.
One cannot legally consent if they are intoxicated, drugged, underage, mentally challenged, or unconscious.

Okay!
Consent is about full disclosure with potential sexual partners about STI's and STD's, even if it is scary to do so.

Not Okay.
Coercion is the use of emotional manipulation to persuade a person into doing something they may not want to do. Not cool.
Okay!
Ask your partner before trying a new act or taking it to another level. It can be sexier than you may think.

Not okay.
Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance, often in school or the workplace.

When in doubt, ask!
It is your responsibility to be honest with your sexual partners and to make sure any act is okay and safe. Ask permission instead of going ahead in anticipation of a "yes" or "no."
It is important to be tested for STD's, whether or not you are showing symptoms because many STI's (like HIV) can show no symptoms and still be transmittable.
So, Tell Me about your Sex Life.

In order to be tested you must ask your health care provider or visit a clinic; your doctor will not test you automatically.

So BRAVE!

Different diseases require different tests, so your health care provider will ask you questions to determine what tests you need.

STD testing?! What are they gonna do to my dick?!

Slow down there fellas, you probably won't even have to take off your pants! Most STDs in males can be tested in blood or urine samples.
If you are trans or gender-queer, it is important to tell your doctor both your gender identity and the state of your genitalia, so they can offer you the health care procedures you need.

I am a man but I have a vagina.

If you have a cervix, pap tests are a good idea, even if you are not having sex with male bodied people.

Some infections, such as HIV, won’t show up on a test until a certain amount of time has passed.

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URINE CLEA
URINE TEST!

BLOOD TEST

SPECULUM
COTTON SWAB
PAP SMEAR

TISSUE SWAB
This may seem scary, but it is very much worth it. Frequent STD testing can put your mind at ease, let you get the help you may need, and protect both you and your partner.
Perhaps you should consider... CONDOMS!

Condoms are worn over a penis or sex toy and are 98% effective in preventing STD's and pregnancy when used properly.*

Put condom on when penis is erect.

Open carefully to avoid damaging the condom and be sure to check the expiration date.

Yes!

No.

Pinch the tip! Squeeze air from the tip and unroll the right way around to the base of the penis.

Don't forget to check every so often to make sure the condom is still on.

Don't let it get away!

*According to Planned Parenthood in 2013, male condoms are 98% effective when used correctly, but only 82% effective across the board.
Do Not

use two condoms, reuse condoms, or use a ♀ condom and a ♂ condom simultaneously.

if you are nervous practice on a banana!

THE FEMALE CONDOM

Female, or internal condoms, can be inserted hours ahead of time and protect from skin-to-skin diseases that external or male condoms do not.

Female/internal condoms are 95% effective and can be used vaginally or anally.

* According to Planned Parenthood in 2013, when the internal condom is used correctly 5/100 women will become pregnant each year, but when not always used correctly this statistic is raised to 21/100.
WHAT ABOUT ORAL SEX?

Most STD's can be transmitted orally. Using barriers can help protect you!

They make flavored condoms for a reason friends! But be sure to check the label, spermicide can make your tongue go numb, and it tastes awful!

baby go down on me!

um... well I bit my tongue pretty bad earlier... so...

Giving oral sex when you have cuts or sores on your mouth greatly increases your chances of contracting HIV and other STD's.

Yeah, but chicks can't give anything to each other, right?
Many people think that any kind of sex that does not actively involve a penis is intrinsically safe. Unfortunately, this is not true. Many STI's, such as Herpes, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis can be passed through Cunnilingus.

To protect yourself place a dental dam over your partner's vagina.

* Giving oral sex to someone on her period increases the risk of HIV transmission.
Yeah but what about when sex doesn't involve tongues and/or genitals?

Let's talk about...

**SEX TOYS!**

It is possible to pass bacterial STIs such as Chlamydia and gonorrhea through the sharing of sex toys.

Instead of sharing, use two different sex toys, or put a condom on your toy and switch it out between partners.

**IM MELTING!**

Silicone based lube can break down silicone dildos. Don't do it! Use water based lube instead.

In most situations you can clean a sex toy in hot water or in the dish washer, but the Hepatitis C virus is strong and can survive most household cleaning agents.

I REFUSE TO DIE
Unprotected anal sex puts you at high risk for STDs. Always use a condom to protect yourself from STDs, even without direct risk of pregnancy.

Condoms are more likely to break during anal sex, so use lots of water-based lube to reduce friction.

If using a female condom for anal, be sure to remove the inner ring. I doubt you want to put that up your anus.

For oral sex on the anus (analtingus) use a dental dam!
CHECK YOURSELF OUT!
Get to know your body! Sometimes when something is wrong there are symptoms. Getting familiar with your body is the first step to spotting changes and catching possible problems early.
Give yourself a breast exam.

Look at your boobs in the mirror!

Stand there!

Arms up!

Hands on hips!

So what am I looking for exactly?

Squeeze each nipple gently to check for discharge.

Time to feel yourself up!

Feel around for bumps or irregularities in both breasts. You could try standing up, laying down, or in the shower!

Methods include:

- The circle
- Up & Down
- Wedges (like a pizza)
got testicles? Check em' for Lumps!

GRAB THOSE GONADS!
Place your index and middle fingers under testes with thumbs on top.

Roll testicle gently between fingers to check for lumps!

IT IS TOTALLY NORMAL FOR ONE TO BE BIGGER THAN THE OTHER

Look Out For:
- Change in size
- Suspicious lumps
- Pain or discomfort
- Sudden collection of fluid
- Feeling of heaviness

AT LEAST BUY ME DINNER FIRST!
Some of us need contraceptives!

There are two aspects to safer sex, keeping your body safe and keeping your future in control. Protecting yourself from involves being tested using barriers, and indicating with sexual STD's. Frequently, communicating with sexual partners can prevent transmission of STD's. If you and your partner biologically have children are not planning to do so anytime soon, then you also need to consider contraception.

All statistics in this section were taken from the Planned Parenthood website in 2013.
Condoms and internal condoms however, condoms can are the only methods of break and it is a great contraception that protect idea to back barriers up you from both pregnancy with another form and STD's.

There are many options

And what is best for one couple may not be what is best for another. It all depends on your body and your particular situation.

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Hormonal Methods

Hormonal contraceptives give females a low dose of estrogen and progestin, or just progestin, which regulate the body's menstrual cycles and prevent pregnancy.

How It Works:
One pill taken at the same time every day.

Effectiveness
* Effectiveness is reduced to 91% when not taken at the same time every day.

Pros
- Can help prevent acne
- Regulates menstrual cycles and can lessen cramps and PMS symptoms.

Cons
- May increase risk of certain health problems, including blood clots.
**How it Works:**

*The Patch*

A small patch that sticks to skin and is replaced weekly.

**Effectiveness**

* Reduced to 91% when not used properly

**Cons**

- Same health risks as the pill
- Less effective for females weighing over 198 lbs.

**Pros**

- Same as the pill
- Does not require daily administration

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**How it Works:**

*The Ring*

A small flexible ring placed in the vagina monthly for 3 weeks intervals.

**Effectiveness**

* Reduced to 91% when not used properly

**Cons**

- Same health risks as the pill
- May increase vaginal irritation, vaginal infection, or cause nausea

**Pros**

- Same as the pill
- Does not require daily administration
How it Works

A shot injected into the arm by a doctor every 3 months

Injection + Exam

Effectiveness
* Reduced to 94% if not used as directed

99%

Pros
* Does not contain estrogen.

Cons
* Could cause irregular, heavy, light, or loss of periods
* May cause some uncommon but serious side effects.

Don't forget, hormonal birth control has a wide range of possible health benefits and side-effects. Since hormones affect everyone differently, what is right for one person may not be right for another.
SPERM KILLERS

How it works:
A substance that prevents pregnancy by immobilizing sperm.

When used alone spermicide is only 71% - 85% effective, and is recommended in combination with other forms of birth control.

SPERMICIDAL SPONGE

How it works:
Spermicide filled sponge which blocks the cervix.

* The sponge is less effective for women who have given birth: 76-80%.

* Most forms of spermicide are effective for about 1 hour after application.
IMPLANTS

How it works:
A matchstick sized rod inserted into the arm every 3 years by a healthcare provider.

Effectiveness
99%

Pros

- Doesn't contain any estrogen
- Ability to become pregnant returns quickly after removal
- Effective for 3 years

Cons

- Could cause irregular, heavy, light, or the loss of periods.
- May cause uncommon but serious side effects.
- Possible pain at the insertion site
How it Works:

A small T-shaped device inserted into the uterus by a healthcare provider.

Hormonal I.U.D. prevents pregnancy by releasing hormones:
- Effective 5 years

Copper I.U.D.:
- Copper causes the body to produce a fluid which is toxic to sperm.
- Effective 10 years

Pros:
- Copper I.U.D. does not change hormone levels
- May reduce cramps or lighten periods (hormonal)
- Can be used while breastfeeding

Cons:
- Some health considerations or medications may rule out the I.U.D.
- Possible pain caused by insertion procedure
- Can worsen menstrual symptoms (copper)
- Irregular periods for 3-6 months (hormonal)

Intrauterine Device

Lasts 5-10 years

Effectiveness over 99%
The Diaphragm

How it Works:
A shallow silicone cup inserted into the vagina to block the cervix

* The diaphragm should be used in combination with spermicide.

* Effectiveness reduced to 88% when not used properly.

94%

Pros

* Non-hormonal

Cons

* Must be fitted by a health care provider and updated if user loses weight, gains weight, gives birth or has an abortion.
DON'T FORGET!
Condoms and internal condoms are the ONLY contraceptives that also protect from STD's.
OH NO!
I forgot my hormonal birth control
the condom broke! I had unprotected
sex for some other reason
WHAT WILL I DO?!

SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE NEEDS
EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION!
*THE MORNING AFTER PILL

HOW IT WORKS:
BIRTH CONTROL THAT CAN BE USED
TO PREVENT PREGNANCY UP TO 5 DAYS
AFTER UNPROTECTED SEX.
* 85-89% effective within 3 days of unprotected sex, and continued reduced risk up to 5 days.

* As of April 2013 anyone over the age of 15 with a photo ID can purchase Plan B.

Plan B may cause nausea, dizziness, vomiting. Plan B should not be used as regular contraception because it is more expensive and less effective than other methods of birth control.

**The Morning After Pill**

is not an abortion pill. The mechanism of action is most likely a delay in ovulation. Sperm can survive up to 5 days in the female genital tract. It is not about the trip, more about the available egg and survival.
Here are some STD's

The following pages are intended to be a brief introduction to the most common STD's. If you show any of these symptoms or suspect you have any of these diseases seek the help of a health care provider.

All facts and statistics in this section were taken from the Planned Parenthood website and WebMD in 2013.
HIV/AIDS

Found in: Blood, semen, vaginal fluids, anal fluids, and breast milk.

HIV cannot pass through unbroken skin, but can be transmitted through any mucus membrane, (so you know, all your body cavities).

* Symptoms may not show up for several months to several years after infection.

The HIV Test

The HIV test checks for antibodies in your blood. If these antibodies are present the result will be positive.

It takes up to 3 months after infection for anti-bodies to appear so testing during this period can show a false negative.

* In rare cases it can take up to 6 months.
HPV - Human Papillomavirus

There are over 130 different strains of HPV.

Some strains cause genital warts. There is no treatment but having a doctor remove the warts can reduce the risk of transmission.

Most strains clear up on their own, but some increase the risk of cervical or anal cancer.

HPV vaccines prevent 2 (or more) of the most common cancer-causing HPV strains. These vaccines are most effective when completed prior to initiating sexual contact.

HPV can be transmitted many ways including:

- To penis
- To vagina
- To mouth
- To hand

So if you have a vagina you should consider a pap smear no matter your sexual orientation.

* No HPV test exists for men.
CHLAMYDIA

The most common sexually transmitted bacterial infection in the United States.

3 out of 4 females and 1 out of 2 males with Chlamydia experience no symptoms.

**IF YOU DO HAVE SYMPTOMS...**

- Pain during urination
- Pain in abdomen
- Discharge from vagina
- Watery drip from penis
- Bleeding from vagina
- Itching/bleeding anus
- Swollen/tender testicles

* Easily spread with or without symptoms.

**SCIENCE HAS A CURE!**

CHLAMYDIA is simple to test for and easy to treat with antibiotics.
GONORRHEA
AKA "THE CLAP"

4 out of 5 females and 1 out of 10 males with gonorrhea experience no symptoms.

IF YOU DO HAVE SYMPTOMS...

- Menstrual irregularities
- Painful urination
- Pain in abdomen
- Pain in genital area
- Thick white vaginal discharge
- "Pus-like" discharge from penis
- Easily spread with or without symptoms

Soreness of throat or trouble swallowing are signs of an ORAL INFECTION.

* 9 out of 10 oral infections show no symptoms

GONORRHEA is simple to test for and easy to treat with ANTIBIOTICS!
HEP B

Found in: semen, vaginal fluids, blood, saliva, and urine

About 50% of adults with Hepatitis B (HBV) show no symptoms.

If you do have symptoms...

Initial symptoms are generally "flu-like". Later symptoms include:

- Jaundice (yellow skin)
- Dark urine
- Pale bowel movements
- More severe abdominal pain

90-95% of adults with HBV recover fully in 4-8 weeks. The other 5-10% become chronic carriers and remain contagious their whole lives. There are drugs to help treat HBV, but not cure it.
SYPHILIS

Spread by contact with a syphilitic sore, usually during sexual contact.

SYMPTOMS

STAGE 1
Painless sore on the mouth, sexual organs, or rectum lasting 2-6 weeks. Sometimes symptoms are so faint they may go unnoticed.

STAGE 2
A rash anywhere on the body along with "flu-like" feelings.

TREATMENT

Early stages of syphilis can be treated with antibiotics, but damage done in later stages cannot be reversed. This is why it is important to be tested frequently for STD's.

Many historical figures probably had syphilis.
HERPES

HERPES SIMPLEX VIRUS (HSV)

There are two types of Herpes, but both can affect any location with a mucous membrane.

A majority of the population has some form of HSV. Many people with HSV show no symptoms or atypical symptoms, so they may not even know they have Herpes.

Simplex 1 usually oral “cold sores”

Simplex 2 usually found on genitals or anus simplex

Hey.

Chances of transmitting HSV are increased during an outbreak, but HSV can still be transmitted without symptoms.

HSV is passed through skin-to-skin contact of affected areas, including oral sex, non-penetrative sex, and kissing. Condoms are not fully effective protection from HSV, but they help.
What's going on down there? Some symptoms are easy to spot, and can be treated with medicine available at any local drug store.
MYSTERY

IN YOUR UNDERPANTS!
TV (Trichomonas vaginalis)
• Caused by a sexually transmitted parasite.
• Symptoms in males: irritation in penis, pain after urination or ejaculation, discharge from penis.
• Symptoms in females: redness or soreness of genitals, and discomfort in urination.
• Easily treated with antibiotics.

PANTRY CLUE
ITCHY VAGINAL DISCHARGE

BV (Bacterial Vaginosis)
• An infection caused by a bacterial imbalance in the vagina.
• Most likely not an STD.
• Easily treated with antibiotics.

PANTY CLUE
FISHY SMELLING THIN WHITE DISCHARGE
Crabs/Pubic Lice
- Transmitted through skin-to-skin contact
- Treated with an over-the-counter wash

Panty Clue
Itching in areas with pubic hair, sores due to bites or scratching

Yeast Infections (Candidiasis)
- Symptoms include itching and soreness.
- Usually brought on by weakened immune system, antibiotic use, douching, or diet
- Treated with an over-the-counter medication

Panty Clue
White vaginal discharge

* Anti-biotics kill good bacteria in your body along with the bad. Eat yogurt or take probiotics to replace the good bacteria and avoid yeast infections.
TALK ABOUT IT

Communication is key.
Respect your partners and yourself by talking about sex and protection before you are too horny to think straight.

GET TESTED

A lot of STD's can show no symptoms or lie dormant, so it is very important to be tested regularly even if you show no symptoms.
in review

KEEP OTHER PEOPLES BODILY FLUIDS
OUT OF YOUR BODY

STOP

MOST STD'S ARE TRANSMITTED THROUGH BODILY FLUIDS. REDUCING CONTACT WITH BODILY FLUIDS GREATLY REDUCES THE RISK OF STD'S (AND IN MANY CASES PREGNANCY).

IN THE NAAAAAAAAAME OF LOVE.
Thats all, friends!
Thanks for reading, have fun,
and enjoy safer sex!


Isabella Rotman is a Chicago based self-published cartoonist from Maine. She graduated from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2013, and she cares about your genital well-being.

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